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**Testimony of
The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Before the
Public Health Committee
February 28, 2014**

Re: S.B. 126, AAC Children's Exposure to Chemicals

Senators Gerratana and Welch, Representatives Johnson and Srinivasan, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) regarding S.B. 126, AAC Children's Exposure to Chemicals.

S.B. 126 would direct the Department of Public Health to create a list of chemicals of concern to children and would require that the Department report to the Legislature every two years about the prevalence of the chemicals identified and whether any action should be taken. This legislation, if passed, would help protect the health of children and pregnant women.

The PCSW comes at this issue from the lens of how it impacts women. Firstly, research indicates that many of the toxic chemicals being used to manufacture consumer products have the ability to cross the placenta. A recent example of this is new research from Rutgers¹ that says a chemical used to create the color yellow, called PCB-11, is now being found in children's clothing, paper goods and toys. Research indicates that PCB's cross the placenta as well as pass through breast milk impacting both moms and babies. Adverse health impacts of PCB-11 are still being discussed but it's generally agreed upon that PCB's negatively impact the immune system, reproductive system and the nervous system.² Other chemicals like BPA and Teflon chemicals PFOA and PFOS, have been shown to cross the placenta as well.³

Secondly, women are the primary family members purchasing products for their families. Most mothers have no idea that toxic chemicals are being used in many of the baby and children's products they put in their carts because the common assumption is that if a product can be bought off a shelf it must have undergone safety testing. Unfortunately, that is simply not the case. Fewer than 2% of the more than 80,000 synthetic

¹ ABC News, New Concerns Raised About Yellow Dyes, Feb. 2014 [<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/concerns-raised-yellow-dyes/story?id=22640765>]

² U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Health Effects of PCBs [<http://www.epa.gov/osw/hazard/tsd/pcbs/pubs/effects.htm>]

³ Washington Toxics Coalition, Toxic Chemicals Can Pass From Pregnant Woman To Child [<http://watoxics.org/toxicwatch/no-one-can-escape-toxic-chemicals>]

chemicals in commerce have been reviewed for safety.⁴ Mother's want to have confidence that the items they buy for their loved ones are safe.

We applaud the committee's attention to the use of toxic chemicals in children's products. Connecticut needs a more comprehensive approach to this problem and this bill is a step in the right direction. Children should be able to grow up in an environment that is healthy and safe and mothers should be able to purchase products without fear of causing their children harm.

⁴ Coalition for a Safe & Healthy CT, [<http://safehealthyct.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/new-brochure.pdf>]